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Letter dated 11 August 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 1 to 31 May 2008 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon

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Annex

[Original: English]

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

1. This report covers the period from 1 to 31 May 2008.

2. As at 31 May 2008, the total number of troops in theatre was 15,839. This includes 2,185 troops from non-NATO countries.

3. On 22 May 2008, the national assembly of Armenia ratified the protocol on amendments to the memorandum of understanding between Greece and Armenia concerning the involvement of Armenian armed forces in the Greek battalion deployed in Kosovo. The next Armenian contingent in Multinational Task Force East will include two platoons (total, 70 troops) instead of one platoon (34 troops), as is currently the case.

Political situation

4. Serbian President Boris Tadić's Democratic Party won the elections in Serbia on 11 May 2008. Intensive talks on the formation of a coalition Government have started. A majority of Serbs in Kosovo voted in favour of the Radical Party and of Prime Minister Koštunica's Democratic Party of Serbia.

Security situation

5. On 6 May 2008, in Orlovic (Multinational Task Force Centre), unknown suspects damaged windows and the roof of Saint Sada church and some graves.

6. On 10 May 2008, in Pristina (Multinational Task Force Centre), an explosion occurred in a garage under construction. A Kosovo Force (KFOR) improvised explosive device disposal team was called to the spot to investigate. The suspect and the motive remain unknown.

7. On 11 May 2008, in Slatina (Multinational Task Force Centre), an explosion occurred in a Kosovo Albanian house. The Kosovo Police Service is handling the incident.

8. On 13 May 2008, in Pristina (Multinational Task Force Centre), a 26,000-litre diesel tank accidentally exploded in a factory. No casualties were reported.

9. On 18 May 2008, in Strepce (Multinational Task Force East), a Kosovo Serb was detained by the Kosovo Police Service after assaulting a Kosovo Albanian.

10. On 21 May 2008, in Decani (Multinational Task Force West), a Kosovo Serb returnee was beaten up by a Kosovo Albanian as he was passing in front of a bar. Other Kosovo Albanians intervened to defend him and the victim suffered only minor injuries.

11. On 24 May 2008, in Raskovo (Multinational Task Force North), an accidental explosion occurred, probably originating in an old mine. A KFOR explosive ordnance disposal team was called to the spot. One Kosovo Albanian was killed in the explosion.

12. On 25 May, in Klina (Multinational Task Force West), a parked vehicle owned by a Kosovo Albanian exploded. No injuries were reported.

13. On 27 May 2008, in Vrbnica (Multinational Task Force South), the border crossing with Albania was closed for 10 hours due to a hazardous chemical spill.

14. On 29 May 2008, in Pec (Multinational Task Force West), a Kosovo Albanian car exploded near the municipality of Pec after a hand grenade was thrown at it. Three Kosovo Albanians were slightly injured in the explosion.

15. On 30 May 2008, in Zubin Potok (Multinational Task Force North), a Kosovo Albanian male was shot in the back by unknown suspects while cutting wood and was transported to Vucitrn hospital. He was released after receiving treatment.

16. During the reporting period, there were no significant acts of violence or threats against KFOR.

17. A total of 421 incidents were reported during May, compared to 497 in the previous month. Out of the 421 incidents reported, 25 were related to drugs; 26 to counterfeit currency or documents; 39 to smuggling; 10 to explosions; 104 to miscellaneous criminal incidents; 95 to possession of illegal weapons; 27 to weapons and ammunition seizures; and 95 to unexploded ordnance.

Kosovo Force operations

18. KFOR continues to conduct Kosovo-wide framework operations to help maintain a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all in Kosovo. KFOR also continues to provide support to the police at the gates in northern Kosovo and in the enclaves.

19. The overall Multinational Task Force posture did not change in May. The effort remained focused on Multinational Task Force North, reinforced by the Kosovo Tactical Manoeuvre battalion and the Austrian/German Operational Reserve Force battalion. The British Operational Reserve Force battalion started to deploy on 22 May 2008 to take over the tasks carried out by the Austrian/German Operational Reserve Force battalion. Currently, Multinational Task Force North controls 17 manoeuvre companies, amounting to 29 per cent of the forces available in KFOR. Three companies are still reinforcing Multinational Task Force Centre. On 13 May 2008, Multinational Task Force Centre activated the Czech reserve company to increase security in its area. That company unit arrived at Pristina Airport on 17 and 18 May 2008. On 29 May 2008, Austria took over the command of Multinational Task Force South from Turkey.

20. The number of gatherings and of participants at gatherings remained low. Between 30 and 100 individuals still attend the daily demonstration in north Mitrovica, which is the only reported politically motivated Kosovo Serb demonstration. On 26 May 2008, the Serbian Minister for Kosovo-Metohija, Slobodan Samardzic, concluded a two-day visit to Kosovo. The former Prime Minister of Kosovo and leader of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo party, Ramush Haradinaj, conducted a political tour around the Multinational Task Force North area of responsibility. The attendance at rallies was relatively low, ranging from 300 to 1,000 people.

Compliance with statement of principles of the Commander of the Kosovo Force and regulation 1999/8 of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

21. The Disciplinary Board met on 16 May 2008 to discuss five cases, including two for unauthorized absence, one for multiple acts of non-compliance, one relating to suspension with pay and one relating to reinstatement to duty and pay.

Kosovo Protection Corps

22. No recruitment campaign was conducted in May 2008.

23. The current active personnel establishment is 2,876. There are 178 active ethnic minority members (6.2 per cent of the total force), including 157 male and 21 female. The total percentage of ethnic minority representation in the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) remains the same as in April 2008. There are still 127 vacant minority posts on the active personnel establishment list. The reserve personnel establishment list totals 2,000 positions, of which 1,892 are filled, 48 of them by ethnic minorities.

24. The KPC crisis management exercise "Eagle 07" was conducted on 15 and 16 May 2008 and a command post exercise took place at Ferizaj on 21 and 22 May 2008. The final part of the Kosovo-wide Exercise "Eagle 7" was successfully conducted between 27 and 30 May 2008.

25. During May 2008, 16 ceremonies involving 116 KPC members took place. No incidents were reported.

26. The date of 6 June 2008, was confirmed as the official deadline for Kosovo Serbs to return to work in KPC. Thereafter, discharge procedures will be initiated and payments will be stopped. Work is ongoing to draft the KPC pension law. The Kosovo Force Commander would need to make recommendations by mid-August 2008, in consultation with Prime Minister Thaçi, on the selection of key personnel for a Kosovo security force.

Conclusion

27. The security situation remained calm throughout May 2008, although a number of relatively minor incidents occurred across Kosovo, none of which have had any strategic impact. The elections in Serbia on 11 May 2008 passed without any incidents in Kosovo. KFOR retains its reinforced presence, particularly in the north, and continues to stand ready to deal adequately with unrest or violence, especially after 15 June 2008.